

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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P 311305Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 790

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UR

SUBJ: TREATMENT OF U.S. JOURNALISTS IN MOSCOW

REFS: A. STATE 142096, B. MOSCOW 8590, AND C. MOSCOW 8907

1. RE REFTEL A, EMBASSY INFORMED AMERICAN PRESS CORP'S OF SUBSTANCE CHAIRMAN TRAIN'S DISCUSSION AND HIS RECOMMENDATION THAT NEWSMAN BE INCLUDED ON WATER-POLLUTION DELEGATION TRIP, REQUESTING THAT CORPS SELECT POOL REPORTED AND FILE FOR TRIP WITH MFA. POST SIMULTANEOUSLY ADVISED MFA PRESS DIVISION (SOFINSKIY) BY LETTER OF TRAIN REQUEST, ADDING EMBASSY SUPPORT THEREFOR, AND ADVISING OF EMBASSY'S ACTIONS RE PRESS CORPS. P&C COUNSELOR SEEKING MEETING WITH SOFINSKIY THIS WEEK TO REVIEW NON-PAPER POINTS, AT WHICH TIME STATUS THIS PROPOSAL WILL ALSO BE DISCUSSED.

2. ONGOING DISCUSSIONS WITH RESPECT TO POINTS IN NON-PAPER NOTWITHSTANDING, EMBASSY CONVINCED THAT PATTERN OF PREJUDICIAL TREATMENT NYTIMES BUREAU CHIEF HEDRIC SMITH (CF. PARA. 2C, REFTEL B, PARA. 2, REFTEL C) REQUIRES ACTIVE U.S. RESPONSE. WE PARTICULARLY NOTE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS: JUNE 15, EXCLUSION SMITH FROM
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BREZHNEV NEWS CONFERENCE; JULY 19, EMBASSY PRESENTS NON-PAPER

AND MAKES SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO SMITH EXCLUSION; JULY 25, SMITH EXCLUDED FROM SHITIKOV KRELIM CONFERENCE. MFA REVERSION TO STANDARD PRESSURE TACTIC ADDITIONALLY HIGHLIGHTED BY CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDANT RECENT SMITH APPLICATION FOR TRIP TO RIGA. SMITH APPLICATION, SUBMITTED WITH THAT OF CHICAGO TRIBUNE CORRESPONDENT MCGUIRE'S, HELD "UNDER CONSIDERATION" UNTIL JUST BEFORE TRIP DATE, THIS IN CONTRAST MCGUIRE'S, WHICH WAS ROUTINELY APPROVED. APPROVAL GIVEN SMITH ONLY FOLLOWING EMBASSY INQUIRY POINTEDLY NOTING THAT U.S. WOULD RECOGNIZE NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FLAT TRAVEL REFUSAL AND TRIP MADE IMPOSSIBLE BY EXCESS AUTHORIZATION DELAY. EMBASSY NOTES AS WELL THAT MURRAY SEEGER OF L.A. TIMES ALSO EFFECTIVELY EXCLUDED FROM BREZHNEV MEETING, THOUGH OUT OF COUNTRY FOR SHITIKOV GATHERING.

3. IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE, POST RECOMMENDS THAT WASHINGTON PRAVDA CORRESPONDENT STRELNIKOV, AS MOST PROMINENT SOVIET CORRESPONDENT WRITING ON U.S. AFFAIRS THESE DAYS, FOR SOVIET JOURNAL COMPARABLE IN STATURE TO TWO CITED ABOVE, BE EXCLUDED FROM NEXT TWO MAJOR WASHINGTON NEWS CONFERENCES. WHILE EMBASSY WILL REFER GENERALLY TO PRINCIPLE OF RETALIATION, IT DOES NOT PLAN TO MAKE REFERENCE TO THIS SPECIFIC RETALIATORY ACTION IN NON-PAPER DISCUSSIONS ON ASSUMPTION THAT (IF DEPT TAKES ACTION) IT WILL SPEAK FOR ITSELF OR THAT DEPT IF ASKED WILL GIVE REASON FOR EXCLUSION.DUBS

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